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CPW Report No. 26 -- USSR

(Mar. 3 - 16, 1952)

SUMMARY

In industry, attention is focused on the inadequate dissemination of advanced technology and unjustifiably high production costs. Stricter adherence to the cost accounting system is again urged as one of the "basic" methods of preventing losses. The construction of the Volga-Don canal and the reconstruction of Stalingrad, only recently hailed as models of engineering feats and industrial efficiency, are said to be proceeding with undue slowness. Lack of contact between the construction industry and the appropriate scientific-research organizations is given as one of the reasons.

The enormous flow of broadcast material on the Supreme Soviet sessions, the national budget, and Stalin Prize awards has virtually crowded all discussion of ideological matters off the airways. The few items available on the subject are presented in abstract terms and lack specificity.

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CONTENTS

INDUSTRY	1
IDEOLOGICAL AFFAIRS	3
MISCELLANEOUS	4

INDUSTRY

Slow Construction: Lack of Scientific Aid Blamed: The heavily publicized "Great Stalin Construction Projects" (velikie stalinskie stroiki)--the Volga-Don and the other navigation canals--have recently begun to claim increased attention. As pointed out in a previous CFW report, the construction progress had been found "very unsatisfactory" at the Main Turkmenian and South Ukrainian canals. In the latter case particularly, the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party had to intervene with a special decision calling for drastic measures. This time it is the Volga-Don canal that gets some attention, although a major part of the blame, according to PRAVDA (Mar. 6), must be assumed by the branches of science called upon to "assist and guide" Soviet construction. Thus the All-Union Scientific Research Institute for Hydraulic Machine Building (vsesoyuznyi nauchno-issledovatel'skiy Institut Gidromashinostroeniya) is said to be "inadmissibly backward" (nedopustimo otstayot) in its solution of the most important research problems connected with the operation of industrial plants and installations. Lack of coordination is also noted between the Kharkov Polytechnical Institute and the appropriate industrial organizations.

The editorial is particularly virulent in its criticism of the slow reaction, or lack of reaction to defects discovered in new machinery. The new earth-digging machines (zerleroyne mashiny), for example, are prematurely put out of commission when the cog wheels are clogged with dust. Soft soil is said to hamper the mobility of the so-called walking excavators (sharayushchie ekskavatory). It is up to the designers, says the paper, to look into the performance of their machines and eliminate their deficiencies without undue delay.

The Volga-Don navigation canal, says MOLOT (Mar. 9), is scheduled to be put into operation this spring. This point, however, has become debatable in view of the poor performance of both the construction workers and the various supplier organizations connected with the project. The Volga-Don Shipping Administration has fallen short of the plan for training vessel crews and other qualified workers; passenger premises and quays have not been adequately equipped, and the construction of landings, bunker bases, and similar auxiliary structures "has been stopped altogether." "Inadmissible procrastination" is also charged to the Ministry of Communications, the Rostov Building Administration, the Oblast Consumers Union and other organizations which "are manifesting no interest" in the preparation of mooring places for receiving and

STATINTL

- 2 -

handling freight. There is little time left before the opening of the navigation season, the paper concludes, and the construction tempo must be "decisively intensified" if the present "intolerable" situation is to be alleviated.

In a "collective letter" to Stalin (Mar. 12) the Tartar ASSR oil workers list a number of shortcomings which "are delaying the development" of the Republic's oil industry, and promise to do better in the future. The 10-point pledge of better performance contained in the letter is preceded by the vague admission that "in spite of the successes ... we also have many defects ... we are very much behind in construction work." This point is not elaborated but some inkling as to the drawbacks of the Tartar oil industry may be inferred from the pledge itself, that is, how the workers propose to eliminate the "many defects." We undertake, they say:

to fulfill the annual plan for the production of oil ...
to bring contour flooding to full strength ...
to complete the annual plan as regards all building
and assembly work ...
to reduce the cost of production per ton of oil ...
to train and raise the qualifications of at least
3,000 oil workers ...

The cost accounting system (khozraschet), if properly applied in industry, would have prevented the large losses incurred by a number of enterprises, particularly those of the fishing and lumber industries, according to PRAVDA (Mar. 9). The production cost reduction plan, it appears, has not been fulfilled by a number of important ministries. Among them are Construction Organizations and Machine-building, the Coal Industry, Power Plants, and Machine and Instrument Making. In addition to tightening the accounting system, the editorial suggests that a staff reduction in the mentioned enterprises as well as in some (unnamed) Government offices might be in order:

Cases of overstaffing Government institutions and enterprises as well as violating payroll and financial discipline have not yet been stamped out.

Russian version:

Na izzhity eshche sluchai islishestv v shtatakh gosudarstvennikh uchrezhdeniy i predpriatiy, a takzhe Marushe-
nia shtatnoi i smetnoi distsipliny.

The rebuilders of Stalingrad are reminded by STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (Mar. 11) that their promise to reconstruct the city according to schedule may be difficult of fulfillment if they fail to make a better showing. The building supervisors still maintain "an irresponsible attitude" toward construction schedules and the mechanization of labor-consuming work. The editorial strictures are directed particularly against the apparent reluctance of the builders to incorporate new Stakhanovite ideas into the work, introduce the "brigade cost accounting system" (brigadnyi khozraschet) and pay "due attention" to the quality of the work. A "very alarming sign" is seen also in the failure of the Stalingrad brick factories to provide the necessary building materials.

The nation-wide collection of scrap metal in the Soviet Union, as discussed in previous CPW reports, is an integral part of the metallurgical industry and, like that industry, is administered according to plan. Workers are frequently induced to devote part of their leisure time to scrap metal collection, but many Komsomols, non-Party youths, and even Pioneers have been pressed into accepting that activity as part of their duties. (There has been no indication of any remuneration for metal collection. In the early years of the Soviet regime free theater tickets, beer, and occasionally cigarettes were distributed for similar extracurricular activities).

The shortage of pig metal (chushka) is so acute, declares STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (Mar. 13), that the Stalingrad enterprises are "experiencing considerable difficulties." Both the tempo of steel smelting and the quality of the finished product are affected by the interruptions in the supply of scrap metal. An intensified search for the precious metal is suggested as the only remedy. Another helpful pointer offered by the paper is "to work the dumps and extract the metal that has been lying there for years" This task is assigned to the Oblast Consumers Union, the Central Administration for Useful Raw Materials (Glavutil'syrye) and the Oblast Administration for Ferrous Metal Collection (Guer Chernmet) which are said to be "thousands of tons" of metal behind the collection plan. Among the "many" Stalingrad enterprises reported lagging behind plan due to the metal shortage are the Stalingrad Tractor Plant, the Standard Tractor Parts Plant, and the Red October Plant.

IDEOLOGICAL AFFAIRS

Stalin Linguistics: A Universal Language: National distinctions, says Verkhovtsev in a lecture on Stalin's works (Mar. 3), will remain for a long time even after the establishment of working class dictatorship in all countries. This will be superseded by a "period of Socialism" which will see the unification of the peoples throughout the world into a single culture and, eventually, a single language. The adoption of a universal language, says the lecturer, will be a slow process involving as it will the necessity for everyone to learn that language in addition to his own tongue. Finally, and presumably under world Communism, "only one international language will be spoken throughout the world." Verkhovtsev also ventures to predict that the universal language of the distant future will not necessarily be Russian, English or any other language but a new tongue comprising the "best elements of national and zonal languages."

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA (Mar. 9) is sharply critical of the prevailing indifferent attitude on the part of the Komsomols toward the current political school activities: Komsomol organizations must increase their efforts to make the school year a success. Implicit in the editorial criticism is the fact that the love-the-Fatherland-hate-the-enemy theme is not pursued vigorously enough. This, it is claimed, applies with equal force to the non-partisan youths who depend upon the Komsomols for their political enlightenment:

Soviet youth should be brought up ... in the spirit of love toward our Fatherland and hate toward our enemies. The bestial essence of American imperialism should be continuously explained. Youths should be brought up in the spirit of sacred hate toward the enemies of the Socialist Fatherland.

More Militancy on the "Philosophical Front": In a long unsigned article commemorating Lenin's work "On the Meaning of Militant Materialism" (o znachenii voinstvuyushhego materializma), PRAVDA (Mar. 12) takes issue with the Soviet philosophers who, it declares, "still remain heavily indebted to Soviet public opinion" (vse eshche ostayutsia v bolshom dolgu pered sovetskoy obshchestvennostiu). Looking back over the past 5 years, the paper says that the performance of the Soviet theoreticians leaves much to be desired. Numerous theoretical problems produced by advancing science and Communist construction "do not get profound treatment" (ne poluchayut glubokoy razrabotki) and are not sufficiently publicized in philosophical literature.

The philosophical fraternity is reminded that its chief duty is to maintain close contact with the scientists and provide a theoretical foundation for the new attainments in natural sciences. The combined efforts of these learned men, however, must also be used for the "irreconcilable struggle against ideas alien to Marxism, against the penetration of reactionary bourgeois-philosophical ideas from the outside." Just how this is to be dealt with is further outlined in the following injunction:

The gist of the problem is to tirelessly expose the contemporary reactionary bourgeois philosophy and sociology; to lash out against bourgeois ideology and culture; to unmask the preachers of cannibalistic theories, the ideologists and the defenders of aggressive plots by American imperialism.

Russian version:

Zadacha sostoit v tom, chtoby neustanno razoblachat sovremennuyu reaktsionnuyu burzhuaznuyu filosofiu i sotsiologiu, bichevat burzhuaznuyu ideologiu, kulturu, oblichat propovednikov ludosodskikh teoriy, ideologov i zashchitnikov agressivnykh zamislov amerikanskogo imperIALIZMA.

Implicitly admitting that the "remnants of capitalism" in the people's minds have not yet been overcome, PRAVDA asserts that it was precisely that failure that prompted the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party in 1944 to create a scientific-enlightenment propaganda body (The All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Scientific and Political Knowledge). The latter, it says, is called upon to "cleverly and scientifically" (ostroumno i nauchno) dispel the still prevailing superstitions and prejudices among the masses.

The members of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences are not up to ideological requirements, according to a Filimonov article in PRAVDA (Mar. 11, not broadcast). Responsibility for that, he says, lies squarely on the shoulders of the Academy's Party organization which "has not noticed" (ne zametila) certain aberrations and is "not properly channeling" (nedostatochno natselivayet) their efforts toward the fight against manifestations of bourgeois nationalism. The Party is even said to have "glossed over" the crude distortion of the history of the national-liberation movement in Lithuania such as appears in some of Prof. Mikolaitis' works. Another scientist, Jurginis, is accused of truckling to Western bourgeois culture (preklonenie pered zapadnoy burzhuaznoy kulturoy)--something the Party should have noticed and dealt with in time. Neither has the Academy's Party bureau taken note of the fact that certain Academy members are wasting their time on such frivolous and pseudoscientific themes as that "The Apron is Part of the Lithuanian Woman's National Costume."

MISCELLANEOUS:

Politics for Children: In a broadcast for Ukrainian children (Kiev, Mar. 6), Stakhanovite woman Yakovenko tells the youngsters to remember that on the international scene America always has been and still is the villain of the piece. Nearly seven years have passed since the end of the war, she says, and there is still no peace treaty with Germany. It goes without saying that the Americans are responsible for that, because they have other ideas in mind:

American imperialists, together with imperialists of other countries, concluded an aggressive North Atlantic bloc in 1949 directed against the USSR The imperialists are making plans for a new world war.

Toys for Children: In a letter to PRAVDA on Mar. 12, writer Mikhalkov and artist Zhukov, both Stalin Prize winners, complain of the authorities' indifferent attitude toward the manufacture of children's toys. All the efforts of various "enthusiasts" to acquire more toys for children are dashed to the ground by the indifference (ravnodushie) of the RSFSR Ministry of Local Industries which stubbornly refuses to "recognize" (priznavat)

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- 5 -

the toy. Neither does the amusement-game section of the Education Ministry display any particular interest in recreation facilities for children. When the popular demand for toys became loud enough to reach the ears of the USSR Trade Ministry, the latter put an end to the whole thing by a curt and unequivocal refusal to give the matter further consideration:

Due to the acute shortage of paper products on the market ... the Ministry of Trade of the USSR finds it impossible to allocate any paper or cardboard for children's games.